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SUBJECT: Special Envoy Discusses Election Preparations with DSRG  
Lidder, UN Elections Advisor Kennedy

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert E. Whitehead, Charge d'Affaires; REASON:  
1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a February 20 meeting with Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Jasbir Lidder, Special Envoy (SE) Scott Gration said strong United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) leadership is needed to meet current and future challenges, including support for the elections, protection of civilians and post-2011 arrangements. Lidder said UNMIS could rightly take credit for progress in Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) implementation, election preparations, relative peace in Abyei, and successful demining in the South; and it is doing more to improve protection of civilians and publicize its successes. While UNMIS' mandates are acceptable, he continued, UNMIS needs more resources to carry them out, as well as clearer understanding by donor countries of UNMIS' unique limitations. UN Elections Assistance Division Sudan Director Ray Kennedy and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Sudan Director Jerome Layraud told the Envoy that National Election Commission (NEC) regulations will make it impossible for many designated individuals to participate as domestic observers, and that the NEC is ill-prepared for a runoff. A failure to name Southern Sudan and Abyei Referendum Commissions before the elections will create major challenges for the referendum timetable. End Summary.

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Lidder: UNMIS Needs Resources, Not Mandate Change  
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¶2. (SBU) In a February 20 meeting with the Special Envoy, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Jasbir Lidder described the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) as one of the most difficult operations ever undertaken by the United Nations given the large territory it covered and the unique political environment, including the presence of a second peacekeeping mission in country. A large organization, UNMIS interacts with a number of high level leaders with intersecting roles, including incoming SRSG Haile Menkarios, UN-African Union (AU) Darfur mediator Djibril Bassole, United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Joint Special Representative (JSR) Ibrahim Gambari, and UN-AU High Level Panel on Sudan Chairman Thabo Mbeki, as well as with innumerable local NGO actors. At the same time, UNMIS must be mindful of the sovereignty of the host nation, and this combination of all factors which make UNMIS less nimble than it otherwise might be. Despite these complexities, UNMIS can be credited, at least in part, for the fact that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is on track, that election planning is moving forward, that Abyei is more peaceful than it was before the

Permanent Court of Arbitration decision, and that demining in the South has been extremely successful. Civilian protection is a part of the UNMIS mandate, Lidder granted, but each UN specialized agency has a different view of what constitutes civilian protection. He said that tribal violence in the South is an ongoing backdrop to UNMIS' primary mandate of monitoring the CPA. To carry out its civilian protection mandate, UNMIS now has a greater field presence, including more temporary forward operating bases, and is more active in civil affairs. At the same time, resources are a continuing problem. UNMIS has asked for fifteen additional helicopters to support the elections; only three are under contract. Actionable information is also often lacking. UNMIS will conduct more proactive reporting so as to do a better job of telling others how it is accomplishing its core mandates, Lidder stated, and UNMIS may hold a protection conference as a reality check to assure that it is doing all it can. UNMIS sees part of its task as working cooperatively with other entities to reach shared goals. Nonetheless, the complex system that is UNMIS has its own constraints and its own dynamic; anyone trying to push it beyond its limits may win an individual battle, but lose the war.

13. (SBU) Special Envoy Gration noted that strong leadership is needed if UNMIS is to rise to coming challenges. It is not enough to report on violence, the Special Envoy said; the UN must be able to mobilize and pre-empt, with people trained in conflict mitigation. He asked whether Lidder considered the current UNMIS configuration a static one, with six out of every ten employees at

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base supporting four in the field; or whether he would consider it a more robust configuration, with eight out of ten persons in the field and two at base in support. Lidder responded that UN forces are supported by civilians in a centralized support unit, which means that each commander in the field does not control his own resources, but rather is subject to a system of checks and balances. The current force of 10,000 could, Lidder noted, be reconfigured and reoriented to new roles, but this will take time. SE Gration asked Lidder what, if anything, should be adjusted in the UNMIS mandate. Lidder responded that the mandate is adequate, but that more resources to carry out existing mandates are needed. On post-2011 issues, Lidder noted that the North needs to realize that UNMIS will not just disappear following the referendum, but will need to remain on the ground to meet continuing challenges, but noted that UNMIS focus has already begun to shift to the South.

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Kennedy: Runoff Likely, NEC Planning Deficient  
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14. (C) The Special Envoy also met with Ray Kennedy, UN Elections Advisor, and with Jerome Leyraud, Chief of Party International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). The Envoy asked the advisors if the number of international observers was adequate, or whether he should press for more. Kennedy noted that he hoped for 500 international observers, but that domestic observers are even more crucial because they are able to see and hear things that international observers cannot. However, he noted, stringent accreditation requirements put in place by the NEC, especially ID requirements, may exclude a large number of domestic observers, thus weakening the observation effort. Asked about the likelihood of a runoff, both advisors said they believed one would take place, and that NEC has not yet done sufficient planning. The international community is pressing NEC to set the date for the runoff in June, rather than in May, as set forth in the current electoral calendar, the advisors said, to allow adequate time to prepare. The expressed extreme concern about the lack of a

logistics plan to transport ballots to polling places, and lamented the fact that the NEC had not yet provided the data so that UNDP can begin to print legislative ballots. They feared the NEC could postpone legislative elections on logistical grounds, and blame the international community for not delivering ballots on time, but go forward with the executive elections with ballots that are printed locally. All ballots are supposed to be serialized and have counterfoils, but security overnight and during counting will nonetheless be a challenge, especially where polling stations are located outdoors. If the Southern Sudan Referendum and Abyei Referendum Commissions are not named prior to the elections, both Kennedy and Leyraud stressed, there will be major challenges to holding the referenda in January 2011.

16. (SBU) Comment: DSRSG Lidder was the former UNMIS Force Commander for two years and knows the realities on the ground as well as anyone involved in the South. We expect him to provide much improved leadership to UN efforts over the coming year.

17. (U) Special Envoy Gration's staff cleared this cable.  
WHITEHEAD